

on the other, to the Bleenniidæ. Some of the latter elongate the basal pectoral bones considerably, and lead to the Batrachidæ on the one side, where the number of these bones is increased, and on the other to the Pediculati, where the number is diminished. To these groups the Anacanthini and Heterosomata are less allied.

The third upper pharyngeal bone has already presented an increase of mass and use in the first orders of Physoclysti with ventral fins. Among the Percomorphi the same increase makes its appearance by little beginnings in some Scianidæ. It is quite noteworthy in most of the Carangidæ, a group whose separation from the Scombridæ by Günther is supported by this part of their organism. Through forms not now specified, approach to the Pharyngognathi is made. Here the pharyngeals are modified into a mill-like structure, which is least specialized in the Embiotocidæ, and most so in the Scaridæ.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

### *Osteology of the Solitaire.*

*To the Editors of the Annals and Magazine of Natural History.*

GENTLEMEN,—In a paper on the osteology of the Solitaire of Rodriguez, communicated by my brother, Mr. Edward Newton, and myself to the Royal Society, and published in the ‘Philosophical Transactions’ for 1869, there occurs the following passage relating to the remains of that bird which had previously come to the notice of naturalists:—

“In addition to these *eighteen* specimens, we are informed that in 1860 or 1861 a tibia, the shaft of a tarso-metatarsal, and some fragments of the shaft of a femur, all of which belonged to the Solitaire, were sent to Professor Owen by M. Bouton, of the Museum at Mauritius; but the fate of these specimens is unknown to us.”

In a paper published a few days since in the ‘Transactions of the Zoological Society’ (vol. vii. part 7. p. 519, note) Professor Owen quotes the above-cited passage, and then, after printing a letter from the late Mr. James Morris, accompanying the specimens to which the information we had received referred, states what they really were, and continues as follows:—

“They were returned to the Museum at Port Louis, Mauritius. The first and sole evidence of Messrs. Newton’s interest in these fragments reached me with their memoir. Any previous inquiry would have, at once and most readily, received the reply given in the present note.”

Professor Owen makes this statement in error. Some time before our memoir was finished, and therefore before it reached him, my

brother and I made personal and explicit inquiry of him as to the fate of these bones, concerning which we were naturally anxious to know whether we had been correctly informed. His "reply" was so vague as to compel us to be content with the guarded expression we used. It will be seen that the "reply" he has now given is not more satisfactory. It shows, indeed, that two of the three bones or fragments which we had been informed were sent by M. Bouton had reached Prof. Owen, had been rightly recognized by the former and "returned" by the latter; but it says nothing as to their "fate," which remains as "unknown to us" now as it was then. One thing is certain—that on search being made last August in the Museum at Port Louis, they were not forthcoming.

Fully appreciating the terms of general approbation in which Professor Owen has been pleased to mention our paper, the carelessness as to the fate of these particular specimens, whatever may have been their number or condition, which he imputes to my brother and myself is so great that I need not apologize for troubling you with the assurance that it has no foundation in fact.

I remain, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

Athenæum Club, Pall Mall,  
January 10, 1872.

ALFRED NEWTON.

*Tapirus villosus.*

The British Museum has received from Mr. Buckley a series of specimens of different ages of *Tapirus villosus* from the Cordillera of Ecuador. The adult male is black, closely covered with rather short hair; the young is covered with abundance of longer hair; the young is marked with broad grey streaks more or less confluent or united into short grey lines. The nasal bone of the adult is elongate.—  
J. E. GRAY.

*A Letter concerning Deep-Sea Dredgings, addressed to Prof. BENJAMIN PEIRCE, Superintendent, United States Coast Survey. By LOUIS AGASSIZ.*

Cambridge, Mass., December 2, 1871.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—On the point of starting for the Deep-Sea Dredging-expedition, for which you have so fully provided, and which I trust may prove to be one of the best rewards for your devotion to the interests of the Coast Survey, I am desirous to leave in your hands a document which may be very compromising for me, but which I nevertheless am determined to write in the hope of showing within what limits natural history has advanced toward that point of maturity when science may anticipate the discovery of facts.

If there is, as I believe to be the case, a plan according to which the affinities among animals and the order of their succession in time were determined from the beginning, and if that plan is reflected in the mode of growth and in the geographical distribution of all living beings, or, in other words, if this world of ours is the work  
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